duties of patients, these were not the predominant traits of either his professional or personal character. Of the many poignant and fascinating observations and comments he made about his calamitous and most extraordinary career there is one which is perhaps more characteristic. At the end of the account of his life as a physician in Philadelphia, and after the expected peroration on the many opportunities offered to him by his calling to serve in the land of liberty and glory, he concluded on this prosaic note:

> However trifling it may appear, I cannot help adding an acknowledgement of the good providence of God in having preserved me from falls in climbing and descending stairs, and from insults in the streets in the most lonely places and at all hours of the night, during the course of one and thirty years.[146]

The Ideal Physician

Despite scholarly rumours to the contrary, the figure of Hippocrates was alive and well in the medical world of the Enlightenment, as we already had occasion to notice. Recreated in the image of the ideal physician by successive generations of medical men, he served as an important conduit in the transmission of Scottish medical ideas to Philadelphia. Undoubtedly one of the most colourful, if not fanciful, depictions of 'the illustrious father of the healing art', Rush's Hippocrates conveniently embodied all the virtues its creator needed to promote his particular theoretical and moral reforms. A semi-divine, patriarchal figure, his external characteristics mirrored his exemplary moral character. He was 'mild in his appearance and dignified in his deportment with gray hairs loosely flowing over his shoulders'.[147]

In two lectures from the first decade of the nineteenth century, Rush exhorted his students to examine the works of Hippocrates, not as undiscriminating worshippers, but critically as scientists. For the Greek was fallible like any teacher, as he himself had found, but with his scientific attitude and his unsurpassed moral character, Hippocrates would disclose to the student of medicine an exemplar of the modern scientific physician and, not least, 'the earliest and most prominent example' of the sympathetic physician.[148] His criterion for a person's suitability for the medical profession was, as reported by Galen, 'Does he suffer ... with the suffering of others? Does he naturally feel the tenderest commiseration for the woes incident to his fellow mortals?'[149] In addition to the 'noble sympathy', a 'heaven-born principle', Hippocrates had other virtues

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which Rush could hold to celebrate the role that American physicians could play in the creation of a new country. Patriotism, though not an obvious medical virtue, was necessary for Rush's expansion of the duties of his profession to encompass every aspect, physical and moral, of social life. Hippocrates had afterall saved his country from the plague and demonstrated his attachment to the independence, peace and liberty of his native Cos.[150]

As the ideal physician, Hippocrates lacked only one thing, the Christian religion, and that could be added from other, more recent sources. For like Gregory and Percival, Rush portrayed the ideal physician as a Christian gentleman as well as a scientist. Like them too, he eschewed the professional ethos of the ancient guild in favour of one which more adequately reflected the goals of the new inductive science. He castigated professional or 'interested' men who failed to contribute to the advancement of medicine. He reminded his students, for example, that while the study of chemistry was in the hands of physicians, it was 'limited in its objects and nearly destitute of principles'. It was only in the laboratories of private gentlemen-scientists such as Priestley, Cavendish and Lavoisier that those great discoveries occurred which 'exalted chemistry to its present rank of usefulness'. It was not the empiric, or mechanic, let alone the physician practising medicine as a trade, but rather Bacon's 'speculative men of general knowledge', who could raise any intellectual endeavour, including medicine, to the level of a science.[151]

For Rush, as for most Edinburgh-trained physicians, the guild represented exclusive privileges and restriction on freedom of inquiry, both of which were anathema to the enlightened man of science. As he noted in an introductory lecture delivered in 1801,

> Conferring exclusive privileges upon bodies of physicians, and forbidding men, of equal talents and knowledge, under severe penalties, from practicing medicine within certain districts of cities and countries ... however sanctioned by ancient charters and names, are the bastiles [*sic*] of our science.[152]

The once-fashionable figure of the physician as coffee-house wit had no place in the new profession and reminded his students, as Percival and Gregory had also done, that 'singularity' of any sort was professionally unattractive.

> The profane and indelicate combination of extravagant ideas, improperly called wit, and the formal and pompous manner, whether accompanied by a wig, a cane, or a ring, should be all

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> avoided, as incompatible with the simplicity of science and the real dignity of physic.[153]

The simplicity of science, which Bacon had impressed on all his faithful followers, was an ideal Rush embraced at the cost of alienating many of his Philadelphian colleagues.[154] For many other contemporary physicians, the acknowledgement that science was 'simple' was translated into a call for clarity in speech and writing, for more appropriate and modest dress in keeping with this quality, and for increased simplicity in prescribing medicines. It was neither fashionable nor prudent, for example, for a physician to prescribe too many mixtures of medicines, for this recalled the derided alchemical brews of pre-scientific times and could not, moreover, be scrutinized for its efficacy. While Rush enthusiastically adopted and encouraged all these practices, he also, as he so often did, carried the idea to its logical conclusion. If science was simple and medicine was a science, then medicine must also be simple. It was, indeed, so simple that a medical student could very quickly learn everything he needed to know in order to practise. As he wrote in his autobiography,

> Other things contributed to offend my medical brethren ... I had declared medicine to be a science so simple that two years study, instead of five or more, were sufficient to understand all that was true and practical in it. I had rejected a great number of medicines as useless, and had limited the *materia medica* to 15 or 20 articles, and in order to strip medicine still further of its imposture I had borne testimony against enveloping it in mystery or secrecy by Latin prescriptions, and by publishing inaugural dissertations in the Latin language in the medical school of Philadelphia.[155]

Medicine practised according to established principles was not only what made it simple but what distinguished it as a science. For Rush, as for Gregory and Percival, the ideal physician had to apply principles to the facts discovered in the course of his practice. As he warned his students, 'observation without principles is nothing but empiricism',

> and however much the contradictions and uncertainty of theories may be complained of, I believe much greater uncertainty and contradictions will be found in the controversies among physicians concerning what are said to be facts, and that too upon subjects in which the senses alone are employed to judge between truth and error. It is by means of principles in medicine, that a physician can practise with safety to his patients, and satisfaction to himself. They impart caution and boldness alternately to his prescriptions, and supply the want of experience

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